

Message Text

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70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

SAJ-01 OMB-01 ACDA-10 IO-10 /097 W

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R 170018Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7799

UNCLAS MEXICO 4284

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US

SUBJECT: FURTHER REACTION TO MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT

REF: MEXICO 4225

1. GOVERNMENT-LINING MEXICO CITY NEWSPAPERS BEGAN TO PRONOUNCE EDITORIALY ON MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR IN MAY 16 EDITIONS, TAKING A UNIFORMLY CRITICAL LINE:

-- EL SOL DE MEXICO, NOTING REPORTS THAT MAYAGUEZ HAD ENTERED CAMBODIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS AND CARRIED SHIPMENT OF ARMS, WONDERED WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF SIMILAR FOREIGN SHIP HAD ENTERED U.S. WATERS. INCIDENT WAS PROOF ONECE AGAIN THAT U.S. HAS NOT ABANDONED ITS POLICY OF FORCE, SINCE NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT WELL HAVE SUCCEDED IN FREEING SHIP AND CREW, ONCE THEY HAD PAID WHATEVER PENALTY WAS REQUIRED BY THEIR INFRACTION OR ELSE HAD PROVEN THEMSELVES INNOCENT. PRESIDENT FORD'S RESORT TO FORCE WAS INSTEAD A CLEAR ACT OF AGGRESSION, AND U.S. PRESENCE IN SEA IS AGAIN THE CAUSE OF CONFLICT. FOR SAKE OF PEACE, THE "LAW OF THE STRONGEST" MUST BE REPUDIATED ONCE AND FOR ALL.

" EL NACIONAL COLUMNIST VICENTE LASCURAIN WAS RELIEVED THAT INCIDENT WAS NOT EXPLOITED, LIKE TONKIN GULF, TO JUSTIFY "NEW EXPEDITIONARY ADVENTURES". BUT EVIDENCE SUGGESTED A STRONG POLITICAL MOTIVE
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ON U.S. PART NONETHELESS: IT REFUSED TO NEGOTIATIE, IT

IGNORED OFFERS OF GOOD OFFICES FROM UN SECGEN, IT FAILED TO FOLLOW ANY OF UN CHARTER PROCEDURES FOR CASES OF AGGRESSION, AND IT RESORTED TO FORCE WITHOUT WAITING FOR RESULTS OF PEKING CONVERSATIONS. ITS MOTIVES APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN TO REGAIN DEGREE OF LEADERSHIP LATELY LOST BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD, TO SHOW IT HAD NOT LOST WILL TO USE ALL FORCE AVAILABLE TO IT--TO PROVE THAT " IMPERIAL REPUBLIC IS BY NO MEANS A PAPER TIGER". CAMBODIA MAY NOT HAVE ACTED WITH DUE MODERATION IN EXERCISING ITS SOVEREIGNTY AND MAY EVEN HAVE PROVOKED U.S. ACTION-- BUT LESSON IS THAT YOU CAN'T BE TOO CAUTIOUS AT A TIME WHEN U.S. IS TORMENTED WITH DOUBT ABOUT ITS POWER AND FEELS NEED TO TEST IT AGAINST WEAKER COUNTRIES.

2. EXCELSIOR (REFTEL) EDITORIALIZED A SECOND TIME: NOTING NEAR UNANIMOUS SUPPORT IN CONGRESS FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION TO RESCUE MAYAGUEZ, EXCELSIOR DISAGREED THAT ACTION HAD ENHANCED U.S. PRESTIGE. U.S. HAD EARNED RESPECT WORLDWIDE FOR ITS ACHIEVEMENTS IN MANY FIELDS, SAID EXCELSIOR (WITH UNACCUSTOMED GENEROSITY)-- ITS INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY, ITS SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, ITS ARTS, LITERATURE, AND MUSIC, ITS INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT, AND ITS WORLDWIDE INVESTMENTS. "THESE ACHIEVEMENTS ARE SUFFICIENTLY SOLID TO KEEP U.S. PRESTIGE HIGH, EVEN WHEN ITS ARMED FORCES AREN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE". ON THE OTHER HAND, ITS ARMED INTERVENTION AGAINST SMALLER NATIONS OF ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA, ENDANGERING PEACE AND SACRIFICING LIVES, ONLY SERVED TO TARNISH ITS REPUTATION.
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